

## DUPLICATE THE NAVAL ACADEMY.

A SUGGESTION TO CONGRESS.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE decision of all important questions of international dispute will be made on the waters. The nation that rules the sea owns the world.

At present the influence of England is paramount. Britons rule the waves, and it is solely by reason of their undisputed naval supremacy that they were able to maintain their prominent position in the crisis of the Boer war. Other nations, especially France and Russia, would gladly have interfered, but a war with England would have meant the destruction of their navies. An alliance of all the European nations alone would have been strong enough to cope with England on the ocean, and the German Emperor, in conscious opposition to the sentiments of his people, did not favor the idea of humiliating the English for the sake of assisting the Afrikanders. He had more confidence in British rule in Africa than in Boer supremacy. The former can be relied upon to respect German rights in Africa, while the latter would have led to the establishment of a United States of South Africa, which naturally would have put an end to the colonising schemes of all European nations. Thus the only chance of the Boers, namely the check-mating of the English navy by an European coalition, failed, and their only hope now is to render the possession of the Transvaal unprofitable by continuing a guerilla warfare. It is lucky for England that they have no access to the sea, for if a nation of the stubborn character of the Boers could extend their hostilities to privateering on the seas, they might repeat the deeds of the famous John Paul Jones, who at the time of the Revolutionary War frightened the English merchantmen from the seas and caused the British government to confer high honors on their naval commander for a lost battle, in recognition of his brave resistance.

Whatever were the advantages of Great Britain in the present Boer war, one thing is certain, that the energies of all the nations are bent on maintaining and extending their sphere of power by an increase of their navies. Russia's aim in securing Manchuria is not so much the acquisition of new territory as the possession of ice-free ports as a basis for operations. England, having her hands tied in Africa, could not prevent this and so Russia has practically succeeded in gaining a firm foothold in the East Asiatic seas. Russia's next move will be to gain access to the Arabian sea through Afghanistan and Beloochistan.

Germany's efforts to strengthen her navy are not less marked, and it is worth while bearing in mind that the German navy, like the German army, is splendidly equipped and well manned, a statement which can hardly be made of the French navy, though the latter is stronger than Germany's, so far as numbers are concerned.

It is not absolutely necessary that diplomatic difficulties arising from conflicting interests in international affairs should lead to war, but this much is sure that in the peaceable settlement of disputed points those nations only will have a voice which can justify their cause with ironclads and guns. The Monroe Doctrine will be respected only so long as the American navy is powerful enough to keep off intruders from American shores, but not one day longer, for there is a hunger in Europe for transatlantic possessions. We need not say that Germany by reason of her naval strength and progressive spirit is the only nation that could become dangerous to the United States, and there is only one way of preserving peace, viz., by being strong enough to render any infringement upon the traditions of the Monroe Doctrine inadvisable.

Our navy has proved efficient in the Spanish war, but would it be strong enough to meet a more dangerous foe? One fact is patent that for extraordinary emergencies, for a war with England, or Germany, or Russia, it is not large enough to place the assurance of final success beyond all doubt. There is at present no imminent danger of a war, but if difficulties should arise, as happened for instance under Cleveland by the sudden disturbance of the *entente cordiale* between Great Britain and the United States through the Venezuelan dispute, the quarrel will be adjusted only if the two parties are equally matched in strength. Disputes may arise at any moment, over the right of control of the Panama canal, over the proposed schemes of the Nicaragua canal, doubtful though its execution may be, over colonisation schemes and political complications in South America, in which European nations could be

involved by making exaggerated claims for the loss of lives or properties of some of their subjects. We must always bear in mind that weak nations are at the mercy of those that have the power to enforce their claims; and I repeat: the decision of all important questions of international dispute will be made on water.

What is the lesson of these truths for the United States?

The United States ought to be in a position to enlarge their navy at a moment's notice. They ought not only to have enough ironclads ready to be prepared for a sudden emergency, but in addition should possess the materials for increasing and extending their naval forces in times of danger. We can, if war clouds gather on the diplomatic horizon, buy a goodly number of ocean greyhounds, although the Germans in this respect have the advantage of the Americans; but we have not the men to man them. We could at once begin building men-of-war and manufacturing guns, but we could not within any reasonable time educate officers for service. Yet it would be so easy to meet the demand with very little sacrifice, simply by enlarging or duplicating our naval academy.

The United States train just enough cadets at the Naval Academy at Annapolis to keep their navy supplied with officers, not more and scarcely enough. If our government gave the same education to twice as many youths as there are officers wanted in the navy, they would educate a number of efficient sailors for practical use in our mercantile marine and would have a reserve of trained men upon which they could draw in case of need.<sup>1</sup>

We hope that our legislators will see the importance of this advice, which recommends itself for many reasons. The expense is small in comparison to the benefits which it confers. Whatever the future may have in store, we may be sure that the time will come when this Republic of the Western world will be tried in the furnace of international disputes and then we shall be glad to have a goodly stock of men equipped with all the necessary experience to fight on the deck of a vessel. Our strength on the seas and our unquestioned power to cope with an intruder may at a critical moment preserve peace when otherwise war would be the inevitable result.

<sup>1</sup>The writer of this article visited the Naval Academy at Annapolis but his stay was too short to enable him to form an opinion that would be worthy of consideration. The general impression was very favorable and the spirit in which the cadets are treated appears to be practical, healthy, and of a good moral character. The instruction in the sciences, mechanical engineering, etc., never loses sight of the practical application of the lesson; but it seems to be a mistake that the study of German is dropped on the plea that all German naval officers speak English. On a similar plea French officers remained ignorant of German while the Germans studied French. The knowledge of a language gives a man access to the spirit of that nation, and our naval officers have as much reason to study German as Spanish. The method in which languages are taught at Annapolis, however, is very recommendable and produces the best results in a comparatively short time. All efforts are concentrated on making the pupils speak the language. Written exercises are given, indeed, but even they serve the purpose of an oral efficiency, a practical and immediate command of the spoken word.